

Keys to Answered Prayers XVIII

Fred R. Coulter—June, 2007

Now I just wanted to wrap up something here concerning God dealing with us in answering our prayers and helping us to change, to grow and overcome. And when we come through trials and experiences, the last thing I mentioned was that don't let the problems of yesterday impact today; and don't let the problems of today impact tomorrow. That's why we need to always put it in God's hands and ask Him to help us and guide us and direct us.

Now here's something else that we need to always keep in mind when we're praying, whatever we're doing as far as our relationship with God is concerned. Let's come here to Philippians 3:7. Now, unfortunately, some churches leverage this to the ministry. Now please understand that what we're going to cover here is **only to God, only to Christ**. Now in marriage, we're to commit ourselves—husband and wife—the way that we should; to become one flesh. That's why God made marriage. I'm not talking about that. But, I'm talking about anyone else. And especially overbearing ministers that want to use their authority to take to themselves the humility that we are to have to God and make that humility toward them so they can get done whatever they desire to do. God doesn't want that. But here's what our attitude has to be:

Philippians 3:7: "Yet the things that were gain to me... [Whatever we do in the world, whatever ability and things we have to do those things—that ability comes from God. So we have nothing we didn't receive in the first place. But as far as conversion in relationship with God, since we are to come out of the world—not be part of the world—but yet we still have to live in the world, then it is our spiritual relationship between us and Christ. So here's what Paul said:] ...Yet the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ... [And he had everything. He had power, he had prestige, he had the inside track with the high priest and he was one of the leading members of Judaism of his day and he had all of the privileges of it. Everyone was bowing down to him—'Yes sir! Yes sir!' this and that, the whole thing. He kind of got all but lost. And of course, he had a rather of sudden loss of it, didn't he? On his way to Damascus, Jesus knocked him down and Paul understood what it was.] (Then he goes on, v 8): ...But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..." Now, that's a powerful statement.

- knowledge of life
- knowledge of God's Word
- knowledge of the purpose of Christ

- knowledge of why we are here

As we have seen (we'll see a little later) one verse can actually build a whole understanding out of the Bible—and this is one of those.] (He says): ...for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ And may be found in Him..."

- because He's our life
- He's the one Who is our Savior
- He is our High Priest at the right hand of God
- He is our Intercessor

"...not having my own righteousness..." (v 9). Now, what does he mean by that? He means this: *people who are good have a certain form of righteousness*. Now, if they have a religious rigor that they go through, which has nothing to do with the Bible; such as: Judaism, Catholicism, or Islam or Buddhism, whatever it is, that righteousness is your own. Now the righteousness which comes from God is the righteousness of the commandments, plus the righteousness of God's Holy Spirit and the righteousness of being put in right standing with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And in that case then, God the Father actually imputes to you the very righteousness of Christ, though we don't deserve it. Just like He imputes to us, when we repent, the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. So this is what he's talking about here. He says: "...my own righteousness which *is derived* from law... [that's direct reference to the laws of Judaism.] ...but that *righteousness* which *is by the* faith of Christ... [Because this righteousness is not imposed from the outside. This righteousness by faith comes with God's Spirit from the inside—and by your love to God and your choice to do right.] (So, it's called): ...—the righteousness of God that is based on faith" (v 9). So everything we do is based on faith.

Now, as I mentioned in the last one: we have to fight ourselves, we have to fight human nature, we have to overcome those things—those are all there that we need to work, yes, absolutely true. But here's the goal—because what God wants us to do is always keep our minds on the goal. And the reason being is so that we don't get sidetracked on things which multiply problems. So he says: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection..." (v 10). So that's what we are looking to.

And as I mentioned, concerning *High Tech Marvels Today*, there's still one thing they cannot do: *come back to life after they have died*. I always get a big kick out of it when you see these specials

concerning the Pharaohs and they talk about what great things that they had done and so forth. And then they show this mummy of the Pharaoh. And I look at it and I say to myself, he's still dead! Christ is the only one Who rose from the dead, and we won't until He returns.

"Not as though I have already [attained] received... [So this is why everyday we take as a new day.] ...or have already been perfected... [Because we're going to see God wants us to be perfected; and we'll see what kind of perfection that will be. But let's also understand that perfection, in the final analysis, will be finalized at the resurrection.] ...but I am striving... [this is what we need to do. We'll be kind of like a chart. You know how charts are: they have highs, they have lows, they have ups, they have downs. But you're striving.] ...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren [he says], I do not count myself as having attained..." (12-13).

Now here's an apostle who was personally taught by Jesus Christ for three years in Arabia before he came on the scene after his calling. And if you think that anyone would have attained something, it would be like the Apostle Paul. And I remember one man who—I forget his age when he said it—said, 'You know, I've been with Christ so long that Satan no longer has any interest in me'—and guess what? *Bam!* So you can never say that.

Now continuing on, v 13: "...**but this one thing I do...**"

- and this is the key to prayer
- and this is the key to overcoming
- and this is the key to attitude
- this is the key to a spiritual relationship with God
- this is a key to dealing with each other—whether it be husband and wife; whether it be co-workers; whether it be people in the world

"...—forgetting the things that are behind..." Now, some things are hard to get rid of.

I know watching some of these specials on some of the veterans that they have concerning WWII, and they say it's awfully hard to forget the battles. And some of them still have dreams of what it was like in the thick of the battle, like on Guadalcanal or on Okinawa—and those were terrible, terrible, terrible battles where they lost on the first day—just like on D-Day when they went into Normandy, they lost 5,000, the first day, killed! And those who survived, remember heads blowing off, arms blowing off, brains splattered here and there. And they have a hard time forgetting it. Well, how do you forget traumatic things like that, and

experiences that occur. Now, all of us have had experiences one way or the other—some very traumatic; some less traumatic. But nevertheless, we need to ask God to help us forget them. And if they're such a magnitude that they can't be completely erased out of our minds, then to put them in the perspective that we understand them so that it doesn't bother us, and it doesn't gather hold of us.

"...—forgetting the things that are behind..." (v 13). Now he had a lot to forget, didn't he? What did he do? *He caused those who were Christians to be arrested, put in chains and taken off to prison—men, women and children.* And he actually caused the death—by persecution—of many of the saints. And he was standing right there when they stoned Stephen to death—and was agreeing with it. So he had a lot in his mind that he needed to forget. This is why the proper perspective and keeping our minds on the goal is very important. So whatever experiences that you have had in the past, what you need to do is this: Ask God to help you:

1. put them in perspective.
2. If they start coming up in your mind again, don't dwell on it, set it aside.

And it will take practice and experience to do that. And this way it's going to help you every day, *every day!*

Now, if you want to remember something, *always remember the good.* Now if there were things that were not good, then learn the lesson from it, which then will be good. That's all part of it. And this is part of our prayer life—*that we come to God.* That we not only have our sins forgiven, but that we be able, with the Spirit of God, to overcome these things which are hooks of carnal nature and the society and the world around us in our way of thinking. And here's what you do: When you forget then you put in something else. If I want to get rid of something in this cup, I throw it away and I put something else in it. So if you're going to forget things, it's like taking a cup of something and throwing it away. But, then what are you going to do with the cup? You just going to leave it empty? *No!*

"...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead..." (v 13)—resurrection, that's the key. Like with the Sabbath, reaching forward to the things that are on the Sabbath—make the Sabbath a delight. Make the Sabbath something that you enjoy, and you do it by the effort that you put in by the prayer that you have all during the week. And as far as an elder and minister, in order to make the Sabbath a delight for the brethren, what I have to do is study and prepare so that I can bring them messages that are going to help them, encourage them and inspire them, and give them the desire to do what God wants to do.

So then he says, v 14: “I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.... [Always pressing, always going forward. So then here is a vital key, v 15]: ...So then, let as many as *be* perfect... [Now we’ll look at this again—and we’ve seen as we’ve gone through 1-John that love is being perfected and that is the height of perfection. Now, this does not mean that you perfect others yourself by being super-critical of their behavior, to enforce upon them something that you see that they need to do. Now, occasionally that may be necessary—to bring out to them something that they need to do. However:] ...as many as *be* perfect be of this mind.... [Forgetting the things that are behind, learning the lessons, reaching forward to the things which are before, look to the good, do the good. In the world they would say, ‘be positive.’ In Bible language: have faith, have trust, have love and all of those things.] (Now notice): ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (vs (14-15).

So this covers the thing, what if you come up with a day when you have a ‘BA’—you know what a ‘BA’ is? It’s not a degree. *Bad Attitude!* We can all have that, right? What does God do? *God will reveal even this to you.* So that what? *You can change; you can repent.* Every time something comes along that isn’t right, it’s an opportunity to repent and change and go forward. And when that is done, go forward! Put it behind you, learn the lesson and go on—because God will “even reveal this to you. Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind” (vs 15-16).

Now let’s come to Matthew, the fifth chapter, and we’re going to talk about one of the hardest things to do. Let’s go there and let’s see what Jesus said. This is part of perfection. Let’s understand, this does not mean be naïve or stupid or leave yourself open to be destroyed. But it says, Jesus says—Matthew 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies... [Now we’ll see how to love your enemies here in just a little bit.] ...bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you...” (vs 43-44).

Now that’s a tall order. It doesn’t mean, as we will see when we get into the Psalms, it does not mean to be simplistic and stupid, but it does mean that: ***do not let anyone in these categories cause you to go away from God.*** And so what you do in loving them, you put it in a proper perspective. If they’re in the world and can’t help it, you understand it. Maybe [they] just had a bad day that day. There are those who hate you. So what do you do with

them? Well, let’s look and see how you pray for your enemies—we’ll do it here in just a minute.

Now here’s why it’s important, because it has to do with your relationship with God. “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust” (v 45)—doesn’t He? That doesn’t mean He doesn’t judge because of sin. And in judging them the way that God does, that’s actually in love. But what He does, He wants us not to say, ‘Oh, look at those people in the world how miserable and evil they are, and how good I am.’ No, if we see their behavior the way that it is, what we need to do is say, ‘Well, we understand it.’

Now, [I’ll] give you an example. I think someone has been praying for Cindy Sheehan—remember her? Hateful, loud-mouth, attacking everybody, attacking President Bush, even buying land to go down and be right across the road from President Bush and so forth and so on. Well, now she’s given up being a demonstrator. And I think it is because her funding was cut off. There’s a perfect example that the whole circumstances can change. Now, I don’t know if people were praying—I’m sure there were some who were praying. But there’s a good example of what happens to an enemy if you pray about it. What happen was, when she began to criticize some of the Democrats they came on her as viciously as the Republicans did and she found out that not all people are good hearted like she was, if she was good-hearted; or how she may have considered herself. So that just proves a point here that we’re going through.

“...and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?... [Because God is going to save the world, eventually, in His way and His plan and how He’s going to do it—so we need to keep that in mind.] ...Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?.... [Yes, they do.] ...And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary?... [Nothing!] ...Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?.... [Of course!] ...Therefore, you shall be perfect... [Now, this is the goal. How perfect?] ...***even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect***” (vs-45-48). And you cannot obtain that without the Spirit of God. That’s what’s important. And God knows that just of ourselves this is an impossibility!

- But it is possible with God
- the Word of God
- the knowledge of God
- the Spirit of God
- and living God’s ways

Now, let's focus in on how the Bible shows we are to pray for our enemies. We'll see some examples here in the book Psalms in just a minute. I have seven ways you can pray for them:

1. Pray that God will convert them. That's possible; Paul was. So that's the first thing.
2. Pray that you'll receive grace and favor in their eyes. That happened to Joseph when he was thrown into prison—wasn't he?
3. Pray that they'll get caught in their own devices. That's exactly what happened to Cindy Sheehan.
4. Pray that God will fight against them for you. He can do that, and He can create circumstances far different than you can even imagine.
5. Pray that God will destroy them. Now God shows that the wicked are going to go into the lake of fire. He's going to destroy them. Sometimes the wicked are so wicked that God will intervene and take care of them.
6. Witness to them. Now, this may cost you your life.
7. Conquer them through death. That if they kill you it makes no difference because you're going to be resurrected.

Now let's look at #6 and #7 again. Since we're here in Matthew, let's come to chapter 10—let's see how it is that we would witness to them. This also shows how we are to conduct ourselves, too, so that we don't act foolishly and bring things upon us needlessly. Jesus told the disciples as He sent them out on, what you might say, an evangelistic tour.

Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves.... [They were all licking their chops!] ...Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men... [Now this is all part of loving your enemy—beware of them.] ...for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues... [That's what Paul was doing to the Christians—wasn't he? *Yes!*] ...And you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles" (vs 16-18). So there it is, witnessing to them.

"Now when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak... [Because we're to have the Word of God written in our hearts and our minds.] ...for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak.... [Because now you become a tool in God's hands. And He has a purpose in that. And God has purposed it that He communicates to men through men, because He

already communicated to men through Christ.] ...For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.... [So even if it gets to this point] (v 21): Then brother will deliver up brother to death; and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death. And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake; but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved" (vs 19-22). And remember this: ***Not one hair is going to perish. You can't have any greater protection than that!***

Now, let's go and see that, through prayer, how we can use the Psalms in coming to understand the will of God, and how to pray.

One clarification: by saying that if the wicked don't repent, ultimately they're going to be destroyed in the lake of fire, but I mean that God would destroy them from this point of view: Remember that man who committed that terrible adultery there in 1-Cor. 5, He said "Put him out, turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord." In other words, that what they go through will bring them to repentance. Comment from audience: God destroys the enemy through war.

Let's come here to Psalm 109—and this will give us an example here of how David prayed. Now, David was a man after God's heart, correct? Let's see how He prayed and let's see that this is entirely proper for us to do also. Let's pick it up here in Psalm 109:17—this is talking about the wicked man: "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him... [In other words, you're putting him in God's hands—right? *Yes!*] ...as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covers him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually" (vs 17-19).

Now while I'm reading this, what I want you to do is think about some of the things they did in trying to put away organized crime back in the 20s and 30s. Isn't that what happened? *Yes, exactly.* What you're doing in this, you're putting them in God's hands. You're not saying, 'Oh God, give me the sword to do it.' You're saying, God they're in Your hands and they are so wicked.' Let's ask the question: Was it just what happened to Hitler, because of what He did? *Yes!* This is what we're talking about.

Verse 20: "*Let this be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul. But do You for me, O GOD the Lord, for Your name's sake: because Your mercy *is* good, deliver You me. For I *am* poor and needy, and

my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declines. I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh fails of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them: *when* they looked upon me they shook their heads. Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to Your mercy..." (vs 20-26). Now, that's a prayer in the Bible—how you pray for your enemies. You put them in God's hands for His judgment. Maybe through that they'll repent and things will be totally turned around. You never know.

All right, let's come a little further here and let's see some things what we need to do in using the Psalms as part of our prayers to help us pray. Let's come back here to Psalm 34—now I remember a man said, 'Well, my prayer life is getting rather stale.' And I said, 'Well, tell me about it.' So he told me about it and I said, 'Some things are needed every day. Do you need to eat every day?' *He said yes.* 'You think it's a vain repetition to eat every day?' *Well, of course not.* Even if you eat the same thing, what is it? It's necessary for you to live physically. So likewise there things we need to pray for every day. And it's not vain repetition to pray for it every day. But here is what we're doing in prayer, which is so important in our lives.

Psalm 34:4: "I sought the LORD, and He heard me... [Because in your prayer you're seeking God.] ...and He heard me.... [If you are praying as one of the Pharisees recorded back there in Luke 18, to himself, and you're putting in time to pray because you heard a minister say you need to pray every day. Well, it's true, you need to pray every day, that's true. So you grudgingly go off to put in your prayer time. If you're doing that, you're not seeking the Lord. That's the whole purpose of prayer: *seek the Lord.*] (Now notice): ...and delivered me from all my fears." Very key important things.

"They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.... [You're looking to God continually.] ...This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles" (vs 5-6). That is IF you put them in God's hands. So what do you do when you have a lot of troubles and difficulties? If you're at kind of at cross-purposes what to pray about, take some of the Psalms. Open it up here and claim the promises:

- God, You promised You would hear me.
- You promised You would save me from all my troubles.

All right, list out your troubles. List out your problems. Take them to God. 'This is something that is terrible, I need to repent of it. I need Your help. There are circumstances against me that I can't

control. Please intervene and change the circumstances. There are people who are coming against me that I need to have grace and favor because they're after my hide.' And God will give you a way of escape. 'Delivered him out of them all.' And addition to it you get extra help.

Verse 7: "The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.... [Now, the next verse is really quite something—isn't it?] ...**O taste and see that the LORD is good...** [Now God wants you to do that this way: You don't...let's put it this way: tasting is vital in food. 'Tasting the Lord' does not mean run up and take a chomp out of Christ. It means eating His way, His Word. And so that the Word of God becomes just like find food in your stomach, but the Word of God becomes fine food with God's Spirit in your mind. So this is what it means.] ...O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusts in Him [Now we're going to see some things about the design of the Psalms a little later, which I think are really just very inspiring,] ...O fear the LORD, you His saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear Him ..." (vs 7-9). ***God will take care of you.***

Now notice, v 14—there's an obligation for us—right?: "Depart from evil... [What is evil? *Sin, anger, hatefulness, bitterness, false accusations, overcoming things in your mind—you depart from it.*] ...and do good... [So what do we have? Just like Paul said back there in Phil. 3, 'Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth the things which are before.' Same principle: depart from the past, use today and the future.] ...do good; seek peace... [through love, through encouragement, through help] ...and pursue it.... [When you do there's a promise.] ...The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous... [God loves you, called you, watches over you] ...and his ears *are open* unto their cry" (vs 14-15). You lay it all before God, and in faith.

Now, here's another thing in faith that goes hand-in-hand with how to deal with your problems and adversaries. Verse 16: "The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.... [Now here again, the world, the evil ones, those who righteous, those who are seeking God, notice:] ...*The righteous cry, and **the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles***" (vs 16-17).

Now, human life is subject to lots and lots and lots of troubles. That's just the way it is. And in this world it can be compounded even more. A hundred years ago if you wanted to get away from crowds of people you could go find some little plot of land that no one had ever been to and you go out

there and stake it out and there you are—but not today. Everything is compounded, everyone is closed in together. And I don't know how people can live in these mammoth cities like New York and Chicago and Mexico City. What do they have? *12-million people in Mexico City—unreal!*—or is it 15? Can you imagine, crushed in on every side with that?

But He delivers you out of all your troubles. Now, if you have things you're working on in overcoming, that's why prayer is important! And God will give the way. That's why you need to study His Word, you need to put love first, faith, hope, encouragement—all of those things are there, all available through prayer. Now notice what this does then. This changes your whole attitude: It says, "The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit" (v 18). That way then you don't get all hoity-toity over everybody else. It doesn't matter if you're in charge. That's fine. But can you be in charge and be humble about it, yet still carry authority? *Of course you can.* Now there are times when say you're dealing with an unruly employee that really needs to be disciplined, that you just let it go and don't discipline him? *No!* But you do it in such a way as to encourage them so they can help and change. So this helps us understand that it is God doing it *through* us and not of ourselves.

Now notice, here's another guarantee—and this is why this Psalm 34 is a tremendous Psalm, that if you are burdened down with problems, you take this Psalm and when you pray, get on your knees, open this up to Psalm 34 and read these words, claim the promises that are here and make it part of your prayer. And this will help you to pray. And this will help you to have faith in God. Now notice: "Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous... [Why? *Because you live in an evil world, that's why!*] ...**but the LORD delivers him out of them all**" (v 19). Now, we saw 'all' how many times? *One, two, three—at least three times, maybe four.*

Now let's finish off this Psalm here: "He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked... [It'll come back on him] ...and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.... [Because you put them into God's hands, He'll take care of them.] ...The LORD redeems the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate" (vs 20-22). Great, great promises that you need to improve your prayer life.

Comment from the audience: When we come to the end of our lives, God delivers us from all of our problems by putting us in the grave and wait the resurrection. We're delivered from all of them, right? *Yes, indeed!*

(go to the next track)

Now before we get into the Psalms and start analyzing the Psalms, what I want to do is I want to show you a principle of the Bible based upon Revelation, the first chapter—so let's go there—and let's see a tremendous principle that is in the Bible which helps us also understand the unity of Scripture. Because the Word of God, Old and New Testaments, together are complete package and you need both of them. As I mentioned it's just like a lock and a key. You have the lock, but without the key, you don't know what's behind the lock. And if you have the key, you wonder: Where does this fit? I've got some old keys at home—Delores came across them and she said, 'What are these?' And I said, 'I don't know.' So likewise with the Word of God. You can't just have the New Testament, throw away the Old; or you can't have just the Old Testament and reject the New.

So I'm going to show a couple of principles here that I think are really very inspiring. Now let's pick it up here in Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending,*" says the Lord... [Very important. This is to tell us that the beginning and the ending connect.] '...Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come—the Almighty.'"

Then we come over here to v 17—after John saw Jesus in His glorified form. "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last... [Telling us that Jesus is involved in the first and in the last.] ...Even the one Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the grave and of death*'" (vs 17-18).

Now let's come to Revelation 21:5—now this is when God's plan is finished. "And He Who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful'.... [That's why he's written, has had the Word of God written down. Because if it is written down, then it's something that everyone can always refer to, correct? If it were just by word of mouth, who would know how good the memory is? If it depended upon my memory or other people's memories, it might not be too all that fired good. So that's why it's written down.] ...'Write, for these words are true and faithful'.... [And you can take that and you can expand that to the whole Bible. All the Bible's inspired of God. All of it is true.] ...And He said to me, 'It is done.... [finished up to this point.] ...I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life'" (vs 5-6).

Now since we're here in Rev. 21, what I want you to do is turn to Revelation 22, the very last page of Revelation, and I want you to hold your

place there. And let's go to Genesis, the second chapter. And Genesis is what? *Even the very name means beginning*. Right? *Yes!*

Genesis 2:8: "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden... [that's the beginning] ...and there He put the man whom He had formed.... [that's the beginning, one man] ...And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (vs 8-9).

Now, let's come back to Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, the First and the Last. Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments... [and it started out with Adam, didn't it? He commanded the man, saying...yes] ...that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life... [So you've got in the beginning the tree of life, and you have in the end the tree of life.] ...and may enter by the gates into the city" (vs 13-14). Now we have New Jerusalem instead of the Garden of Eden—the completion of God's plan. I get a little excited and cranked on some of these things.

Now, let's come to the book of Psalms, and what we are going to do is see the consistency in the *first and the last* in the Psalms. We'll read Psalm 1 and 2. And we'll take special note of it. Psalm 1:1—this is a good one to memorize. "Blessed *is* the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in His law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water... [So this is how we're to grow in grace and knowledge and change and overcome.] ...that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper" (vs 1-3). Compared to the wicked.

Now notice how this is compared to the tree of life in Genesis, and then the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis. Notice the second part here, v 4: "The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (vs 4-6). Now this is referring to individuals.

Now, chapter two refers to it in relationship to nations and peoples and Christ. So let's read this one—Psalm 2:1—and I think this is the headline for today: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed... [which means *Christ*] ...saying, 'Let us break their

bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'.... [Let's have nothing to do with God.] ...He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my Holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD has said unto me, 'You *are* my Son; this day have I begotten You.' Ask of Me, and I shall give You the heathen *for* Your inheritance... [or that is, *the nations*] ...and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O you kings: be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son... [make peace] ...lest He be angry, and you perish *from* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in Him" (vs 1-12). Quite a way for the book of Psalms to start out, right? And everything in the Psalms builds from there all the way through.

Now let's come to Psalm 149 and 150 and we are going to see the completion of the matter—the beginning and ending, the first and the last. So we've read the first, now let's read the last. We started out "Blessed is the man" and now here it is,

Psalm 149:1: "Praise you the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.... [In other words, all the problems of human life have all been worked out. All the difficulties that you go through and find in the book of Psalms now has been worked out.] ...Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in his people: He will beautify the meek with salvation.... [Give them glory and splendor and honor. Quite a difference. In other words, instead of just being prospered in your physical life, like a tree planted by waters, now you're beautified with salvation.] ...Let the saints be joyful in glory... [Because now they share the glory of Christ.] ...let them sing aloud upon their beds. *Let* the high *praises* of God *be* in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand... [Because we're going to rule the world!] ...To execute [judgment] vengeance upon the heathen, *and* punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints. Praise you the LORD" (vs 1-9).

Now let's read Psalm 150—here is the completion of the matter. And I think it's interesting that this is the last Psalm. Now, compare that with Psa. 2. Psalm 150:1: "Praise you the LORD. Praise

God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that has breath praise the LORD. Praise you the LORD” (vs 1-6).

Now, you talk about the completing of God’s plan, and everything in complete harmony with God. So just like Genesis starts out the beginning, and the ending is complete harmony; so likewise with the book of Psalms—the beginning and the ending. So that’s really quite something the way that those things come together that way. And these things really help us and show us and teach us how then we can establish and maintain that relationship with God. So I think that is really a very interesting setup that is in the way that it is designed. So all the way through then we have the different Psalms—now we’ll analyze a couple of these.

Let’s come here to Psalm 145, and let’s see how this is constructed. Now remember the model prayer that Jesus gave us. What was it? This is how you shall pray: ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ So here’s an honoring of God—praising His name.

Now notice how we start out here in Psalm 145:1: “I will extol You, my God, O king... [If there’s a king, there’s a kingdom—right?] ...and I will bless Your name forever and ever.... [Why? *Because it’s hallowed.*] ...Every day will I bless You... [Now, we’re to pray daily. So there it is right there.] ...and I will praise Your name forever and ever” (vs 1-2). Now notice the exaltation to God. So, if in your prayers you need some instruction and encouragement how to praise God, go to a Psalm like Psa. 145, use these words and start out and let that be a springboard for your prayers so that **your words** will begin to flow; and your own words will flow from that.

“Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness *is* unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty, and of Your wondrous works” (vs 3-5). So here it’s still praising God for all He’s done. So when we come to God we say:

- Oh God, thank You for Your love
- and Your mercy
- and Your kindness
- and Your goodness

- thank you for intervening.
- thank you for giving us Your Word
- thank You that You’ve given us understanding of it

And you do all this before you bring up, ‘Now God, here’s my problem.’ Because also what that does, it gets your mind focused on God and His greatness and gets you in the right relationship with God and the spiritual attitude that you need so that when you start bringing up your problems, you don’t say, ‘God, I’ve got this problem and boy, I just wish You’d really do this to the other person who caused it.’ No! Here you’re coming to God.

- you’re humble
- you’re meek
- you’re praising Him
- extolling Him

And then that gives you the spiritual attitude so when you bring up your problems it’s: ‘Yes God, and I know You can help me.’ Comment was made: This also shows character traits of God that we need to have, too.

Verse 6: “And *men* shall speak of the might of Your terrible acts: and I will declare Your greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.... [Now notice, this whole Psalm here is to acknowledge everything that God does. So you’re prayer is NOT: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name and, God, let’s get right with it.’] ...The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion... [The way that you receive grace is understand that God is gracious, and acknowledge His graciousness and His compassion. Do you want forgiveness? *Yes*. Do you want other people forgiven? *Yes*.] ...slow to anger... [Maybe you’re prayer that you lost your temper real quick.] ...slow to anger... [that helps you also to build the character, as you brought out there, ‘slow to anger.’] ...and of great mercy. The LORD *is* good to all: and His tender mercies *are* over all his works” (vs 6-9). Reaches out to everything that He does.

Now, just for example: In our house we have a window that we look out of every morning and we can see the edge of the roof over the porch. And ever since we’ve been there, all—be 30 years here now. pretty quick, 29. We’ve been in Hollister 31-1/2 years, but anyway, ever since we’ve been there. We have a tile roof and on the edge we have these tiles that come over the edge. And in between each tile there’s a little space that little birds can get into. And also they can come down and crawl up in there. And we have as many as ten wrens laying eggs. And they come out there and we see them. They’re Delores’ babies. Yes, talks to them every morning. And she’s also their guardian because there

comes a big black bird around trying to get into their nest. But they're protected behind the tile. And so you can see God's tender mercies by creating such wonderful things as these beautiful birds—that are sweet; that are lovely; that are kind and all this sort of thing. And I know some, after they're hatched, they fly down on the tree. And last year there was one bird, it couldn't have been any more than an inch and a half long, and it would fly up and grab on the edge of the windowsill of the window, and then start pecking the window. And you look at that sweet little thing and you think, 'Oh God, what a marvelous thing that You made such creatures—for Your enjoyment, for our enjoyment.' And this comes to mind when reading about His tender mercies are over everything.

And you can see that one of the tender mercies that God has for everyone is a dog. Doesn't matter who you are, doesn't matter how you're dressed, it doesn't matter what your problems are, if you've got a pooch-a-pooch and you sit down, he'll come up and love you. And so great is that thing with a dog, that they have found that they can turn hardened criminals around by letting them have a dog. Yes, because what they need is, they need someone to love them. And no one loves them because they're hated. But a dog doesn't know that. And if you pet it, and dogs will do this: they want to be petted. And if you don't pet them, they'll come up and stick their head right under your hand till you pet them. There's another example of the mercies of God.

We have a picture in here, because I made the comment one time: I wonder what it would be like to eat giraffe meat—because a giraffe is a clean animal. It has split hooves and it chews the cud. So I got this wonderful picture from Australia, with a note, and it showed a mother giraffe licking the head of her newborn giraffe, sitting there like that, with a note: 'Fred, you wouldn't want to eat this, would you?' And if you've ever had the opportunity to do so...I know when we were up in Salt Lake City, we would go to the zoo and they had where you could walk up and you could look the giraffes right in the eyes, and they have the biggest, softest, kindest eyes; and they don't make a sound.

And you can just multiply that through everything. Well you see, those things God has given us to inspire us so that we have tender mercies; that we have love and understanding. And if God has done that, even for the animals, think about His tender mercies for us! So that's why you can take verses like these, read them, begin thinking about it, and pray to God concerning it. Verse 10: "All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You."

Hold your place. Come back here to Revelation, the fifth chapter. 'All your work shall praise you...' Now, exactly how that is done, I don't know. But whatever noise that they make, it's in praise to God.

Revelation 5:11: "And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne... [in another place it says thousands of angels and ten thousand times ten thousand angels.] ...and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands, Saying with a loud voice... [and this is one of my favorites in *The Messiah*]: ...'Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing'.... [Here, you can even use this to start out your prayer; and doesn't this tie right in with what Jesus said how we are to begin our prayer: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name'? *Yes!* Now, this is of Jesus.] (Now notice, v 13): ...And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying... [Now, how he heard this and what kind of sound this would be, we're going to have to wait to the resurrection to see that and to hear that. But notice what the message was:] ...'To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb... [so this is to God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...*be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity'" (vs 11-13). Fantastic! So there we have a fulfillment of the Psalm we read back here, 'let everything praise You.'

Now, Psalm 145:10, again: "All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (vs 10-12).

What is the Gospel of Jesus Christ? *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, yes!* What was it? Here, let's come to Matthew 17—and I imagine that James and Peter and John thought about this a long time. Here's one memory that you want to keep, if you had this experience. Now He didn't take all of the disciples, He just took Peter, James and his brother, John.

Matthew 17:1: "And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light.... [Now you talk about an awesome experience. And when Peter talks about the Word of God being written, he bases it upon this experience here.] ...Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him" (vs 1-3).

We'll see later this is a vision. He says, 'Tell the vision to no man'—because Moses and Elijah are in the grave. Remember what it said about Moses, 'He was buried in this mountain, Mt. Nebo, and no one knows where his grave is today. Can you imagine what Rome would do if they ever found a real tomb of Moses? Boy! Now also, what does this do? With this transfiguration experience, what is Jesus doing with these three men? *He's raising them to the same level of access to God as Moses had*—because Moses saw part of the glory of God. Here they saw part of the glory of Jesus through the transfiguration. In either cases neither full glory. And it had to be a vision because no man can be in the presence of God and live, because His level of existence is so powerful that flesh would disintegrate.

"And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three tabernacles here: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah'.... [So that shows it was probably pretty close to the Feast of Tabernacles time.] ...While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!'.... [Well, just like the children of Israel hearing God speak from Mt. Sinai—WhooHoo!] ...And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces in extreme terror. But Jesus came *and* touched them, and said, 'Arise, and do not be terrified.' And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone.... [What an experience that must have been.] ...Now as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead'" (vs 4-9). Quite an experience! And this was to put His seal of approval on them in the same way God put His seal of approval on Moses.

Now, let's come back to Psalm 145:13: "Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations.... [Now notice, **notice**, what God does. Look at all the praise to God numerating all of His qualities, His character, His Kingdom. And all of this just comes from the first two verses of the model prayer back there in Matt. 6.] ...The LORD upholds all that fall, and raises up all *those that be* bowed down.... [Because God loves you. God cares for you. He's going to lift you up.] ...The eyes of all wait upon You; and You give them their meat in due season. You open Your hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (vs 13-16).

Now just remember that when you watch some of these specials about wildlife and what God provides for them. The birds, what God provides for them, and how He provides it. And isn't it

interesting, each one eats something a little differently, right? *Yes!* And God keeps everything so clean. He has many scavengers: hyenas, vultures—they do the dirty work, that's why they're called *unclean*.

Comment was made: You can expand on that by watching specials like that's been on Discovery Channel, about planet earth. And you watch *Planet Earth* and you will understand evolution could never have happened. And that God has, in the ocean...can you imagine the job in keeping the ocean clean. He's got all kinds of creatures, from little minute things to whales—and they patrol and keep it clean.

Yes, "they satisfy every living thing." Now, v 17: "The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways... [All of these things are good for us to reiterate to God, because this gives us confidence in God.] ...and Holy in all His works.... [Now also, let's realize that God is humble.] ...The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.... [Now, you're ready to start praying in truth and honesty—right?] ...He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him. He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserves all them that love Him, but all the wicked will He destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless His Holy name forever and ever" (vs 17-20). Quite a Psalm!

So if you get down in the dumps and you think your prayers are kind of stale and too repetitious—now there needs to be some repetition in it. Just take a Psalm every day—depending on what your need is—and go through it.

Now, let's look at a Psalm of repentance. Let's come to Psalm 86, and again we will see that it's based upon the model prayer that Jesus gave back there in Matthew, the sixth chapter. And this is a good one if you've had bloopers during the week, or if you've just done something really bad and you wonder, 'Oh God, will You hear me.' The answer is, *Yes! Yes!* This helps you to repent.

Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy.... ['Yes, Lord, I just committed a great blooper!'] ...Preserve my soul; for I *am* Holy... [because you have God's Spirit] ...O You my God, save Your servant that trusts in You.... [Now you see, then you're coming to God, and you're trusting God.] ...Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto You daily. Rejoice the soul of Your servant: for unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For **You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive...**" (vs 1-5).

What is God waiting for? *He's waiting for repentance, He's ready to forgive.*

- because God deals with us
- and has called us
- and has given us His Word
- and knows that we're weak in the flesh
- and knows that we have to change and grow and overcome
- and we're fighting human nature
- we're fighting sin
- we're fighting Satan
- we're fighting society
- we're fighting our self and maybe everyone around us—because we're in a bad, crank attitude or something.

Is God able to forgive us of this? *Yes! He is ready to forgive, waiting for repentance!*

“...and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon You.... [So if you don't go to God and pray, you're not calling upon Him. So even though He's ready to forgive, He's waiting for you!] (so, v 6 says): ...Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer me.... [So again, this is a good example on how to pray when you're in trouble.] (Then he says): ...Among the gods *there is* none like unto You, O Lord; neither *are there any works* like unto Your works.... [Then you get your mind up on greater things, don't you? And this is how we get out of the rut of the mundane stupidity we get ourselves in.] ...All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord; and shall glorify Your name.... [Knowing that when the Kingdom of God is on earth, yes that's exactly what's going to happen. And is God able to answer all their prayers? Hear every one of them? *Yes, because God is great and can do it.*] ...**For You are great, and do wondrous things: You are God alone**” (vs 5-10). God is ready to intervene in your life.

“Teach me Your way...” So what happens with this is what? *The Psalms help you get into a repentant and teachable attitude*—and that's what God wants. And it's a spiritual operation. Comment was made: “Teach me Your way,” not Your religion—“Your way.” Now, if you don't have the messages on *Why God Hates Religion*, write in for them. We have six messages on it, and we're going to try and get it on a CD here sometime down the road.

“Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your Truth: unite my heart to fear Your name.... [Now notice what that does. Then your heart is right. Then you can love God with all your heart. Worship God with all your heart. You can repent to Him with all your heart, and pour your soul out to Him.] ...I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Your name for evermore. For great *is* Your mercy toward me: and You have delivered

my soul from the lowest hell.... [‘You've forgiven all my sins. Blotted out, cast them into the depths of the ocean. Removed them as far as the east is from the west.’] ...O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent *men* have sought after my soul; and have not set You before them.... [So again, you relate some the things that you're going through] ...But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering... [and He's got to be with all of us] ...and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength unto Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid.... [Let God strengthen you. And how can God strengthen you the most, with His Spirit, to give you the right frame of mind? Because if you have a bad attitude, you're not in a right frame of mind, you feel rotten—don't you? *Terrible*—don't you? *Nothing goes right*—does it? *No, everything bad—bad, bad, bad!* So here you're in the right frame of mind.] ...turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength unto Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid. Show me a token for good... [In other words, ‘Encourage me, God, with Your Spirit. Give me grace and favor in the eyes of those I'm having difficulties with. Let's that be a token for good.] ...that they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed: because You, LORD, have helped me, and comforted me” (vs 11-17). Now the Holy Spirit is called ‘the Comforter.’

Now, we'll continue on next time in how to use the Psalms to improve your prayer life. And we won't go through many, but we'll go through enough, like we did with these two today, so that you can see how then to use the Psalms so that you can pray. So that you can get in the right attitude that you need to be, so that you can focus on the love and power and mercy and forgiveness and kindness and goodness of God—and let Him be your Help!

Old Testament Scriptures from the *King James Version*
New Testament Scriptures from *The New Testament in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Philippians 3:7-10, 12-16
- 2) Matthew 5:43-48
- 3) Matthew 10:16-22
- 4) Psalm 109:17-26
- 5) Psalm 34:7-9, 14-22
- 6) Revelation 1:8, 17-18
- 7) Revelation 21:5-6
- 8) Genesis 2:8-9
- 9) Revelation 22:13-14
- 10) Psalm 1:1-6
- 11) Psalm 2:1-12
- 12) Psalm 149:1-9
- 13) Psalm 150:1-6

- 14) Psalm 145:1-10
- 15) Revelation 5:11-13
- 16) Psalm 145:10-12
- 17) Matthew 17:1-9
- 18) Psalm 145:13-20
- 19) Psalm 86:1-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 John
- Luke 18
- Philippians 3
- Matthew 6

Also referenced: Sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*

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